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The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

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Henry Zylstra

In Memoriam

HOW DOES ONE speak of the dead? It is proper, when death comes, to lean upon the Scriptures and speak of God. It seems improper, under the circumstances, to lean upon the memory and speak of a man. It is in any case a hazardous thing to do. It is hazardous not only because the memory is fallible, as the Scriptures are not, but also because, if man is ever the proper study of mankind, he seems least so in the moment of his death.

Death is the open gate to eternity. A man passing through it is difficult to discern, for God is at the gate, and His glory envelopes all, obscuring whatever is not Himself. And since God is there, is there any one we dare speak about but Him? May people standing in the presence of death have eyes for anyone but God? And is there anyone that people are more in need of in such a situation? Who is there to comfort and reassure but Him? Is He not God, who makes His Presence felt nowhere so powerfully as at the limits of our life? And should our eyes and our heart not now be filled with Him?

No doubt they should. And yet I have undertaken to speak of a man — of Henry Zylstra, colleague, friend, and fellow-editor. The reason for this is that what appears in death, at the portals of eternity, is not only God, but also man — man in the presence of God, man and God in confrontation, man disclosed, man standing in the most basic and central relation in which it is possible for him to stand, the relation of creature to Creator.

This relation exists indeed in life, but it is attended there by a multitude of others which, supervening upon it, obscure it. In death it is stripped of all its historical associations, laid bare, and revealed as central. And since it is man's central relation which defines him, it is in death, as nowhere else, that we see man as he is — a creature under the superintendency of God, a religious being answerable finally to no one else but God. This is why I dare speak of Henry Zylstra even in his death.

I dare do this the more because Henry Zylstra did not wait for death in order to learn that he came from God, was responsible to God, and was on his way to God. He was not ignorant of the central relation in which he stood. He was aware of it as few men are, and it was this awareness that formed him into the man he was. He was God-conscious, and this consciousness, directed by a grace-inspired will, gave wholeness, direction, unity, and simplicity to his life and person.

SIMPLICITY was his outstanding characteristic. Henry Zylstra was brilliant: the Lord had given him a high intelligence, a sharp and incisive mind. He was also learned: he had acquired a formidable erudition, and no field of human interest was entirely foreign to him. He was in addition a superlative teacher: he employed unstudied methods, and possessed an ability to communicate and disclose which is rarely discovered and never acquired, because it is a gift. But it is not by describing him as intelligent, learned, or able that we can disclose the man. There have been and there are other men who are this and bear no resemblance to the Henry Zylstra that we knew. What defined him was a moral quality: *Simplicity*. What distinguished him was unity, singleness, integrity, wholeness. Henry Zylstra was of one piece. He was focussed. There was in him a veritable concentration of power. It was this that accounted for the weight of him; it was this that lay behind the impact that he made. He had God in his eye, and his eye was therefore single. This gave a linear and incisive quality to his whole character and to all his powers.

He had a faculty, for example, of cutting through the underbrush that surrounds a question and proceeding straight to the heart of the matter. He was not one to be misled by irrelevances. He could not easily be diverted. He declined to be confused.

Again, he was intolerant of sham. Pretension he regarded as an impertinence in a universe ruled by God. He discerned it as an artificiality. Nothing pleased him more than authenticity. He could detect the spurious when it was still far off. No mere facade fooled him for long. It was not the imposing that he valued, but the genuine.

Here lies the secret, too, of that wholesome detachment that was observable in all his relations with men. Toward human foibles he was charitable, toward human greatness respectful, toward human persons kind and helpful, but toward human authority reticent and detached. He was not a party-man. He had given his heart in pawn to God and he could not own any man, or any party, or any program, as his master. He did not reject the truth because evil men held it; and he did not accept error because good men proclaimed it. He had his direction, and it was laid out by God.

NOW Henry Zylstra has gone. What he meant to the school he served, the community he lived in, the family he loved, the *Journal* he helped

edit, cannot ever be fully told. What can be said is that here was a man, sinful indeed, mistaken at times, heir in countless ways to the depravity we all share, but yet one who, touched by grace, was sent by God to serve us, and to disclose to us the heights men may reach who faithfully employ their gifts in subservience to God who gave them.

—HENRY STOB

Dr. Johnson said that one could not talk to Edmund Burke for five minutes without noticing that he was a man of distinction. That was also true of Dr. Zylstra. I remember clearly the color, variety, and spice of his talk during my first extended conversation with him twenty-seven years ago. His diction already then bore the imperial stamp that has ever characterized it. His good talk needed no elaborate setting, no premeditated polish, no academic regalia. From an apparently exhaustless urn of ideas flowed his effortless yet brilliantly structured prose, wit and wisdom over the coffee cups, on the golf course and fishing pier, in the friendly evening visit, in casual faculty interchange of opinion, in the courteous clash of ideas in faculty debate. I never heard him make a pointless remark. His speech was the gleaming coin of intellectual and spiritual distinction.

Superlative teachers are rare. A student is fortunate to have a handful of them in an extended education. All of us at Calvin, teachers, students, Board members knew that Dr. Zylstra was an unusually gifted teacher. He had the indispensable undergirding of wide and meticulous scholarship, and he illuminated it with an imaginative reach that rose above the mediated detail to encounter the student with *vision.* He knew not only what authors said but what they meant, not only in their own special cultural context, but for us now. His impressive knowledge of contemporary comparative literature put a sure finger on our current cultural agonies — what they mean and how Calvinists assess them. His was a sympathetic understanding from the inside, a creative reading of masterpieces, a going *through* great books. The winnowing of values was done by an understanding heart, and that made the judgment humane and compelling. The massive learning, sound assessment, and sympathetic understanding did not move on heavy feet. It was shared in sparkling phrases, with sunny humor, and a rare dramatic gift. His sense of humor ranged from quiet but devastating understatement to side-splitting dramatization. I have never heard stories better told. To all this he brought a delicate understanding of students. He understood the uncomfortable farm boy as well as the knowledgeable city sophisticate. He gave something to the mediocre as well as to the greatly talented. He was a rarely gifted classroom personality.

To his colleagues Dr. Zylstra was an unfailing stimulus. "That man," said Johnson, again referring to Burke, "calls forth all my powers." His aggressive idealism, remarkable industry, impatience with second-best, his insistence upon high educational standards and sound scholarship were a spur to us all. Copious as his talents were, he never used them for coasting. A teacher in the English Department would feel guilty in talking *about* books instead of going *through* them. He pushed himself relentlessly — too relentlessly we often thought — but his pattern made departmental laziness impossible. In faculty councils he stood firmly for the discipline of humane letters, man thinking instead of partial men "professionalizing." We shall sadly miss his leadership.

At the core of his personality was the dynamic of a robust Christian commitment, a word which he helped make current among us. To that commitment he devoted the full measure of his talents, for it he sacrificed gladly the place in American academic life a narrow scholarly application of his talents would have given him. He would have had an honorable place on *any* American college campus. His chapel talks were radiant with spiritual grace and force; his journalism successfully mediated a virile Calvinism. He succeeded brilliantly in making Calvinistic insights available in the study of the tortuous labyrinth of contemporary fiction and poetry. Christ for him was to have pre-eminence in all things.

Who can recount his services unmoved? The benefactors have many voices. The student whose life he decisively influenced — even into choosing a career, the fledgling writers whose efforts he painstakingly aided, the baffled boy whose problem he untangled, the despondent colleague whom he cheered, the many audiences whom he charmed, the varied committees whom he served, the readers whose vision he widened — we are all benefited. "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." John 5:35.

. . . And now one fumbles with memories, and experiences once more how hard it is to let go. But is all really gone? I believe with Emily Dickinson:

A word is dead
When it is said
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

And not only that. We trust, all of us who love him, through the mercy of our Lord to see him again in that land where the shining ones commune walk.

—JOHN TIMMERMAN*

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*This piece is reprinted through the courtesy of the Calvin College *Chimes*, a student publication.

From the Writings of Henry Zylstra

We must ask . . . whom we mean by the Christian writer. For the times have so wretchedly come apart, and Protestantism has so badly gone discrete, that we hesitate to call anyone a Christian lately except we circumscribe him as a Bible-believing, evangelical, orthodox Reformed Christian. This is not being said in jest, but by way of pointing to the heart of a difficulty. We are a small Church, and we must ask whether it is likely that a person will very often appear among us who has the gift of art and the magnitude of mind required for writing fiction. . . . Moreover, if he were to appear, can we offer him a Christian culture and a Christian society to feed on? Fiction does not spring richly out of the mind of man in isolation.

* * *

. . . We ought not to think that the situation of fiction, of literature, in our time is any worse than the situation in business, in politics, or in social life generally, though the symptom may be more dramatic. We do not believe that the common grace of God is being so far withheld that we cannot participate in those other areas. We can participate in fiction, too. We can make use of those writers who are not Christian but whose embodiments of life are large, just, and comprehensive. We can make use of fiction which owes much to residues of Christian life and thought in the modern culture. We can gratefully read Christian authors of persuasions other than our own, though they struggle with like difficulties. And for the rest we must get on with providing for the Christian writer a Christian culture which he can without conflict, love and explore.

* * *

Their [Catholic authors of fiction] theologically grounded morals and morally grounded psychology is expressing itself in a realism compared to which the realism of the 20's, despite all of its neurological scalpel wielding and clinical anatomizations, seems perfunctory and superficial. The Christian, apparently, is at bottom the most courageously thoroughgoing of realists, the one, after all, who dares to look the devil full in the face, and who, having seen God and Golgotha, finds all other glory and all other horror rather commonplace.

* * *

It is ironic . . . that precisely when the people need poetry worst it is least available to them. There is no denying that the retired religion, confused reason, and demoralized ethics of the contemporary culture make for a poetry which is either unimportant or important but popularly unintelligible. Plainly popular education must succeed where it has failed before. This breach between the poet and the people is evidence of its failure. A democratic community must have a commonly disseminated sense of what its idea is, what its dogma, and what its tradition. When a community has such an idea and ideal, particularly when, as Yeats said, the ideal is held up by an authority, the poet and the people can meet again. The poet does not himself want to be that authority. . . . He does not want to be the reformer. It is, in fact, a part of the pity of the whole situation that in "unsettled ages" the poet is forced to put his poetry either to one side, or else to radical and unpoetic uses. But what the poet naturally and properly wants most to do is simply to deepen and extend the fundamental sense of life underlying a culture, and so to preserve it. Some of the poets are doing this in our time, but they are doing it with extreme difficulty, and they are not being understood. They need the support of religion, philosophy, and ethics. For, as Pound said, when something is wrong with the arts, it is not wrong with the arts only.

* * *

A novel is literature if a comprehensive vision of life, sensitively perceived, is given aesthetic embodiment in it. A novel is literature if it is an appropriately embodied narrative which touches powerfully on life at many points. A novel is literature if an imaginatively gifted person of unusual magnitude of mind presents an interpretation of reality in it. Make sure that the novels you read are that kind of books.

* * *

. . . Separation of truth from statement, of content from form, of idea from style, is a false and fatal separation. The form is essential to the meaning, to the understanding of it, and to the communication of it. The thing we have to say is inert, dead, and incommunicable until it becomes significant, gets its *sign*, assumes form. The truth, thought of as mere matter, is, if it be without form, like the chaos of Genesis. It is void.

* * *

In a good preacher or apologist, a person, that is, with a firm faith, with convictions really felt, with thought that is disciplined in its discriminations, the style is a telling index to the man. He must be a defined man, at one with himself and in command of his thought and life, an individuality, in short, and unique, therefore. He must be a significant man. Such a man's language, such a man's style, reveals the soul of him, the spirit of him, his self.

* * *

If we cannot have genius, if we do not have it, we can at least try for one of its earmarks: Genuineness. . . . Now it may do no good to go around telling people to be real, to be genuine, but those of us who have a Christian profession to make, in speech, sermon, article, or whatever, ought perhaps to begin there. It is as helpful a statement as any that can be made in this matter that if we are real our language will be vital, and that if we are not real our language will betray the lack.

* * *

We can lodge our message only if we believe. We cannot lodge it, flesh our sword in it, make it telling, if we say only what we ought to believe. This is the humbling and the denuding thing in the plea for a more vital language. This requires humble, prayerful, and determined searching. For it is the peril of orthodoxy, of any kind — political, economic, D.A.R., Stalinist, Catholic, or Reformed — that the official is substituted for the real conviction, that propaganda is substituted for witness. The style of propaganda, the diction of party-manifestoes, the "line" of the dictator, however embellished and ornamented, remains lifeless and artificial. The soul of the free self is out of them. The faith believed, the conviction felt, and the truth acknowledged — these sustain orthodoxy, and from such self-

integrity and honesty a vital profession is born.

Such genuineness most emphatically requires humility and requires prayer. Something akin to inspiration is needed, and inspiration, which is the breath of the Spirit, is — let us admit it — not a thing achieved, but a gift given.

. . . There are Bible colleges in which The Book renders the books superfluous, as though Bible and reader existed in a vacuum devoid of historical orientation, rational context, or cultural relevancy. And there are liberal colleges enough in which the books have rendered The Book superfluous, assigning it to a place among the masterpieces of world literature or the histories of comparative religion. At Calvin [College] we can sacrifice neither the uniqueness of the one, nor the relevancy of the others.

* * *

Some of us may think sometimes that all we want in a Christian teacher is a Christian personality who has some teaching techniques. But what we invite by that mistaken sense of the thing is indeed a Christian personality on the one hand, and some pedagogical skills on the other, but a neutral educational content lying between. This cannot be called Christian education. It must in fact be called secularism in education, no less so because it is conducted under evangelical auspices.

* * *

. . . The thing that makes the Christian in the teacher's training educationally significant is his scientific mediation of life and reality. This is hard philosophical and moral work. It must be general, not fragmentary. It must be thorough, not superficial. It must be followed through into the concrete; it cannot remain a theoretical profession. It must be real. It requires five rather than two years beyond high school: four for the liberal base, one for the professional application. That way lies the avenue to distinctiveness in our Christian schools.

* * *

We talk world-and-life view. We respect reason. We acknowledge history. We come to grips with civilization because we know that being civilized expresses a choice for Christ or against Him. We explore natural things as human beings in a universal order. We study science, also as token and symbol of spiritual history. Art matters for us. Society is a live option. Literature is more than a pastime. Language involves and edifies us. For us the Kingdom is world-wide, and its proving ground is Education. We have no mind to let religion go one way, and life another.

This kind of Christian idea is unique. We have not yet done justice to it. But the start and the direction are right. And a university, if it be a growth and not a construction, if it be Reformed, is the way to discover, appropriate, and develop that idea.

Social historians say that evangelical Protestantism is superficial in its social criticism. This charge does not embarrass us so long as it comes from a liberal who is looking to environmental change for his Utopia. But the charge embarrasses us when, as it sometimes does, it comes from a Christian historian. Then we allow that there is something to it. Then we admit that we have featured the isolably personalistic evils: vice, crime, gambling, drunkenness, sexual immorality, realistic fiction, and Hollywood. We isolate them, externalize them, accept the symptom for the disease. This, we say, is what evil is. This is sin. This, we say, is the world. To these mainly, to what lies behind them hardly at all, we apply our sermons, on these converge our exhortation. We can almost keep the law of decency perfectly.

The result is superficial social criticism. The result is also meager contribution to social improvement. But those are the less important results. More important is the religious loss, the loss of spiritual conviction: that our miseries are great, that we desperately need our Redeemer, and that our gratitude ought to be boundless.

* * *

. . . The fact is that religion in our age and country is insular. It is very largely disengaged from life. It seems to acknowledge no essential involvement with what we call civilization. It floats as a detached cell in the bloodstream of practical affairs. It is a department among departments, a specialty among specialties. Instead of counteracting disintegration, it has itself disintegrated. It stalks like a disembodied ghost among the secular shadows.

* * *

Our religion is by the grace of God planted and seated in our humanity, and must be central in it. And our humanity is involved up to the hilt in life. We cannot then accommodate this religion to a crumbled society. We cannot accommodate it to a disintegrated self. We cannot regard practical life in its historical involvement and in its cultural and social extension, as something independent from our personal religious life.

* * *

Few will deny that work in our age needs the sanctifying influence of contemplation. The harshness of secular exploitation must be taken out of it by the tenderness of religious purpose restored to it. Men have made their work their end. Their work is therefore their fate, and they are victimized by it. No wonder: work that is not free, that is not oriented to final purpose, that provides no knowledge of God — such work violates the spiritual nature of man who was born for this end that he should know and enjoy Him.

* * *

The neglect of contemplation results . . . in an abuse of art. On this count . . . Puritanism has a burden on its conscience. It has sometimes ignored art, sometimes opposed it, and sometimes bent it to practical uses. Art is in this respect like religion: it does not want to be vindicated by its usefulness. It wants to be itself. The songs, the psalms of David, are fruit of the contemplative life. They express the enjoyment of the knowledge of God as He is revealed in the Word and the work. Such indispensable leisure is the condition always for the production and the enjoyment of art.

* * *

Sometimes at college we get students who are always chafing at their set because they cannot see what all the Bible, philosophy, history, literature, language, and science are for. They want — sometimes, one guesses, parental prompting — a fast course in business correspondence, double-entry ledger keeping, shop techniques, secretarial etiquette, and the like. Such an attitude, it should suffice to say now, is hard to relate to the first question and answer of John Calvin's Catechism. They have not fathomed the question, What is the end of man?, nor its answer, to know and enjoy. . . . They do not understand the Psalmist's injunction: Be still, and know. . . .

Hopkins, Hackensack, and Haan

Dick L. Van Halsema

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH is about to mark its one-hundredth birthday. Much has been written about that approaching event, and the end of all this writing is not yet. The present piece concerns that birthday too. It calls attention to a little-known series of developments in Calvinism's American pilgrimage — a series of developments which has its connections with our denomination and which has a lesson for us at the same time of Centennial in 1957.

Samuel Hopkins, to whom I want to introduce you, was a New England preacher and theologian of Calvinist conviction. He was one of those old-time stalwarts whom people called a "divine." Hopkins was born in Connecticut in 1721, barely one hundred years after early Dutch colonists tramped ashore on Manhattan Island, near the mouth of Hudson's River. 1721 was also a full century and a quarter before Van Raalte's vanguard reached the same river, en route to the wilder-nesses of western Michigan.

Young Hopkins turned from farming to the ministry and entered Yale College in 1737 to pre-pare himself for that life work. In his studies he thought himself superior to the majority of his classmates. He felt the same way about the state of his soul. That is, he accepted his inherited Congregational Calvinism in a matter-of-fact way and concluded that this was all that an heir of the Puritan tradition could expect in the way of spiritual experience. But the Great Awakening came to Yale in Hopkins' senior year and the young man was plunged into a distress of heart from which he emerged a spiritually different person. All this occurred at a time of phenomenal stirring in the colonial churches. The upheaval in matters religious caught old-line Congregationalists by surprise and made them resentful foes of the mighty movement which upset the placid doldrums of their churches. They barred revival preachers from their pulpits and mocked the messengers of the "new divinity." But others embraced the Awakening with eagerness. They renewed the demand for stricter standards in the church and for evidence of real conversion in church members' lives. New England Congregationalism found itself a house divided. Never was the church of the Pur-itans' children to be the same.

Under the influence of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), central figure in New England's revivals, Samuel Hopkins began a thirty-year career of "new divinity" preaching and writing. From 1759 until the outbreak of war between the colonies and England, Hopkins engaged in continual "pamphlet war" with theological opponents. Many of their themes were not new. God's sovereignty, man's depravity, the necessity of regeneration, the nature of the atonement, the right use of the sacraments — such were the issues under debate. Calvinists of two centuries already had battled for these truths in particular.

For all his ardor, this man Hopkins had faults. He rode his hobby horses. In certain respects, he was overly bound to a rigorous rationalism — a bad fault for a theologian. He had little patience with those who opposed him. But with might and main, Hopkins fought against all departures from the Puritan doctrines based upon the Westminster statements of the Calvinist faith. First from Great Barrington, in the wilderness of western Massachusetts' frontier, and then from Newport, Rhode Island, where he died in 1803, this friend of Edwards spoke and wrote in defense of what he loved to call "consistent Calvinism." He lived a selfless life, advocating a "disinterested benevolence" by which he sought an end to the negro slave trade more than seventy-five years before the Civil War. Shortly before the end of his life, Hopkins helped frame a constitution for the Rhode Island Missionary Society. Its emphasis upon doctrines such as man's depravity and limited atonement provides clear proof that its chief architect was a Calvinist.

AS THE eighteenth century ran its course, other groups in New England were making themselves heard. Some of these people, called "old Calvinists," despised the revivals of the Great Awakening and the return to strict doctrinal emphases. They scoffed at the idea that only professing believers should attend the Lord's Supper and that only these should be permitted to present their children for baptism. In time, however, the "old Calvinists" lost ground. A new party was rising, composed of a generation which viewed with alarm both the unbridled agnosticism of post-Revolution-

Hopkins, Hackensack, Haan — Cont.

ary War years and the inability of "old Calvinist" leaders to cope with the situation. The new party insisted that a renovation of inherited Puritanism was mandatory. Among other changes, this group wanted a doctrine of the atonement more in keeping with the "times." They claimed to retain the old emphasis upon fidelity to Scripture, but they wished a free hand in remaking the Calvinist faith of their fathers. The theory of the atonement they wanted was not a limited, but a liberal one.

In the theological scheme of things after the war with England, these younger theologians found themselves closer to Samuel Hopkins than to the "old Calvinists." In fact, during Hopkins' life the younger men were proud to be called by the name "Hopkinsian" — a term first applied to Hopkins' views as an expression of derision. In this way it came about that, even after Hopkins died in 1803, the epithet Hopkinsian remained with the ascending party. It was their ardor which brought the Christian faith back to a place of honor at Yale and which gave birth in 1808 to the founding of Andover Seminary — a school which was to play a large part in the rise of foreign missions interest in America. This party's views on the atonement and some other points of doctrine no longer corresponded to Hopkins' own faith, but they still were regarded as advocates of Hopkinsianism. This was a significant thing. By 1820, these "new divinity" views spread among churches in the eastern United States and reached even to the backwoods frontier from western New York to Kentucky. Voices were raised in denunciation of the "new divinity," condemning its views as departures from historic Calvinism. Men began to call Hopkinsianism a heresy and they viewed Samuel Hopkins of New England as the author of it all. That this latter deduction could be false, even in part, seemed out of the question to the critics of Hopkinsianism.

And so it came about that in the controversy over Hopkinsian views the Dutch Reformed Church in America became involved. This denomination, with almost two hundred years' history as a New World church, had been passing through many changes since 1776. There was linguistic change, membership change, liturgical change, and administrative change. Some charged that there was doctrinal change too. This charge was aired at the Dutch Reformed Synod of 1820, and in 1822 schism erupted in the Church. Solomon Froeligh,[1] aged pastor at Schraalenburgh, New Jersey, led a small group of ministers and elders out of the Dutch Reformed body. They declared that they were re-establishing the "*True* Reformed Dutch Church" in America. They asserted that the parent church had succumbed to Hopkinsian teachings and had forsaken the faith. Froeligh and his friends charged that many of the younger Dutch Reformed clergy "advocated the *General Atonement* — a doctrine which the Dutch Reformed Church in her purer days has ever strenuously opposed. . . . but which is now publicly taught and tolerated in the church."

VIEWED from today's perspective, Froeligh's secession is worthy of only passing notice. The movement at its peak included only twenty-six small churches in the two Classes of Hackensack and Union (New Jersey and New York). But the issues involved in the schism are of more than passing interest today. Froeligh's secession had important consequences for the origin of the future Christian Reformed Church.

From a viewpoint of historical accuracy, it can be seen that Froeligh and his fellows may have made a mountain out of a mole-hill. There had been instances in New York and New Jersey of departure from a Reformed doctrine of the atonement; but the Dutch Reformed Church was moving to remedy the situation and in 1824 its General Synod denied the charge that error was widespread. At the same time, the Synod reaffirmed the Church's adherence to Scriptural truth on the doctrine of the atonement. Froeligh's problem, to a large extent, apparently was as much one of his own personality as of any other factor. Thwarted when the General Synod bypassed him in selecting the faculty for the new theological seminary at New Brunswick, New Jersey, Froeligh later got into difficulty with Classis and Synod on matters arising from his conduct in local church affairs. Unhappy with classical and synodical criticisms of his conduct, he made up his mind to withdraw. Many of the men who joined his secession were similarly discontented. There were some notable exceptions among leaders of later years, but a negative attitude continued to exist in the "True Reformed Dutch Church" toward all other churches and missionary movements of the day.[2]

1. For an account of Rev. Froeligh see the *Reformed Journal* of July-August 1954.

2. The only exception was the contact with the young Christian Reformed Church in the West, after the latter's origin in 1857. In 1890, the remnant True Reformed Dutch churches merged with the western group, but in 1908 all but three churches again withdrew.

This is one insight into the general situation which obtained in the Dutch Reformed Church when in 1846-7 an immigrant minister named Van Raalte began the colony of Christian Netherlanders in western Michigan. Then, among the thousands who followed the first pioneers across the ocean, came a man named Gysbert Haan. This Haan, with a few others, in 1857 was to become one of the prime movers of a second secession from the Dutch Reformed Church — thirty-five years after Froeligh's withdrawal. And here is an interesting fact. Although the secession of 1857 was to take place in Michigan, during his first years in the United States Haan lived among the seceders of 1822 in the East and worshiped in their churches. He and others like him were told that the Dutch Reformed Church was not the "true" church, that it was corrupt and unworthy of the immigrants' trust. This partially opiniated outlook went with Haan to Michigan. Although he was by no means the only individual so influenced, Haan within a few years helped sound the call for secession in the West.

It is not the contention of this article that the secessions of 1822 and 1857 were unwarranted or that Froeligh and Haan were motivated only by unworthy aims. Nor does it want to say that the roles of these men were the single factors in those withdrawals from the Dutch Reformed Church. But this article would point out that at a time of Centennial it is of importance for the Christian Reformed people not only to see shortcomings in the Dutch Reformed Church of more than one hundred years ago, but also to ferret out the facts about those who left it in those days for good reasons and for bad. *What* Haan and others did has been told often; the full story of *why* must also be recognized and related. Both the noble and the unworthy elements must be seen. From such frankness should come humility; from such humility, contrition and gratitude. A Centennial can become a time for true repentance from the misguided motives of the past, as well as a time of doxology for the mercy God has shown despite our sin.

BUT — back for one more point to Samuel Hopkins. It has been shown how Hopkinsianism came to be attacked vigorously after its growth in the years following 1800. Congregational, Presbyterian, and Dutch Reformed churches all had their share of turmoil over the Hopkinsian debates. The impact of this mounting stir was that the name of Hopkins himself gradually became identified with the view of a general atonement — an important article of the younger Hopkinsians' creed. Those deeply involved in the debates thought this identification was a logical conclusion from circumstantial evidence. The uninformed knew no better. Gradually popular opinion became general supposition, and general supposition was taken up as historical fact. The process was completed when Professor E. A. Park, of Massachusetts' Andover Seminary faculty, published a volume on the Atonement in 1859 and produced a quotation from Hopkins' *System of Doctrines* (1793) which "proved" that the latter had taught the general atonement theory. What followed is easily understood. Park's prominent pupil, Frank Hugh Foster, merely repeated his professor's material when he wrote his well-known *Genetic History of the New England Theology* (1907). Practically every writer known to present-day students of American Church History, including William Warren Sweet, have followed suit.

The truth is this. Samuel Hopkins did not teach a general atonement. It is absent from all of his many writings available today. Furthermore, he clearly taught the Scriptural truth of a limited atonement, both in his pamphlets and *System*. The quotation used by Park to "prove" the contrary is lifted from a context which gives an entirely different meaning to the passage. The actual story is made plain when the theory of general atonement is traced back to another pupil of Jonathan Edwards, Joseph Bellamy of Connecticut. This well-known eighteenth-century Congregational preacher published his views as early as 1750 and taught perhaps half a hundred theological students at his parsonage over a period of many years. Among these students, who were taught the theory of general atonement, was Jonathan Edwards the younger. Through Bellamy, general atonement became part of the younger Hopkinsians' creed and passed on to become a permanent part of the New England Theology.

Hopkins, Hopkinsianism, Hackensack, and Haan — how remote and unimportant these names seem today! But, properly understood, these names remind us that, under God, we have a serious charge to keep. These names warn us at a time of Centennial that doctrinal complacency and reckless polemic are companion evils, from both of which the Church of Christ must pray to be delivered. They teach us too that a static church dies, that a church which abandons the faith withers away. Hopkins and Haan were far apart in many respects. But in the history of their lives, there is much for us to ponder.

The Age of Science

For the Christian

by T. P. Dirkse

SOME SCIENTISTS are becoming modest about their claims for Science. They are beginning to realize that there are many questions unanswerable by Science. If this is so, if man realizes he is a finite creature, then what incentive is there for him to continue in his quest? Why should he take an interest in nature and the world? Isn't it discouraging when the scientist admits that very likely, ultimately, this universe is past finding out? It must be extremely disheartening for the man of the world.

But how about the Christian? He has this advantage over the non-Christian: he never has looked upon Science as the ultimate panacea for all the ills of the universe. And whether the scientist of the day is optimistic or pessimistic about the future role of Science has nothing to do with the motivation of the Christian in his scientific endeavors. He still seeks to push back the frontiers of human knowledge. Why so?

To answer this question we can do no better than go to the Bible — to the book of beginnings. It is well to know and to understand the purpose for which we were created. And only the Creator can reveal this to man. Now, I know, when the question as to the purpose of creating man is asked we use the term which has become somewhat of a cliche among us, namely, the glory of God. To substantiate this we quote such texts as Colossians 1:16, "For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." Or Revelation 4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Undoubtedly, though the term has unfortunately become a cliche, it is very true that man was created to bring glory to God. But the question still remains: how are we to do this? In a passive way, of course, man the creature, by virtue of the fact that he is a creature does show the glory of his Creator. In that sense all God's works show forth His glory. The heavens and the firmament show forth His handiwork. So, too, does man.

However, the creation of man was something special. And I don't think God has left us in the dark as to the purpose and reason for our existence. The first three chapters of Genesis give us some very good clues. On reading these chapters we find that nothing is stated explicitly about man being created to glorify God. We do read that God looked at the successive works of His creation and saw that they were good. To the sun, moon, and stars, God gave the task to "divide the day from the night; . . . for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. . . . to give light upon the earth" (Gen. 1:14, 15). God made the herb and gave to it the task of yielding seed after its kind in order that it might fulfill the purpose for which He created it.

When man is about to be created we read this: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). That's quite specific: man created to have dominion over all other living things that God has created. No wonder the Psalmist could say, speaking of man, "Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas" (Ps. 8:5-8).

After man is created, God blesses him somewhat as he did the fish and fowl, but there is something additional after the "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." It is found in these words: "*and subdue it*: and *have dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). In these words the task of man broadens out. Not only is he to have dominion over all other living matter, but his task is also to subdue the earth. Part of that, at least, takes the form of agricultural pursuits, for later we read that "the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth

and there was not a man to till the ground" (Gen. 2:5). This is more explicitly stated when we read "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). And still later Adam exercised his dominion when he named all the animals.

NOW THINK of the fall of man. We usually say that man disobeyed God's "trial" command and so fell into sin. But wasn't man's sin broader than that? Didn't Adam disobey that command because he did not fulfill the purpose of his existence by having that dominion that God commanded him to exercise? He allowed nature (in the hands of a clever devil, of course) to have dominion over him, rather than he over it. Or, shall we say that Adam allowed his helpmeet to have dominion over him when he should have had dominion over her — when he should have been guiding her and keeping her in the way of God's command? One thing is certain, Adam was not exercising much dominion or doing much subduing when he fell.

But that is past. Man is fallen. What now? Has the purpose of his creation changed? Hardly. God's purpose with respect to man and His creation stands. The function of man still is to have dominion over other living matter and to replenish and subdue the earth. But now man is daily confronted with that curse which he brought down upon himself when he failed to exercise his dominion properly. His dominion is now hampered on every side with obstacles which, but for God's grace, would certainly defeat him.

We need not take a long look back on the history of mankind to see that in many instances nature has really subdued man. Think of the days of Noah — every man, woman, and child, with the exception of one family, completely subdued by water. Think of the plagues in the days of Pharaoh. Think of the drought in the days of Ahab. Surely nature was subduing man and man, the master, was cringing and dying before nature which was meant to be his slave. But we see God using men to stay the devastation of nature. He uses a Moses to stop the horror of the plagues. He uses an Elijah to open the clouds. These, of course, are miraculous instances. But God still uses men to subdue the forces of nature. We are the only creatures to whom He has given this task. He has never rescinded His command. Either nature holds sway over man — and we do see almost complete subjection of man to nature among the heathen who worship as god that very nature which was meant to be man's slave — or man holds dominion and subjection over nature. We see the sting of God's curse upon this earth when nature so subdues man that he falls down and worships her. The Christian knows the purpose of his creation and existence. He knows the command of God. How can he bring glory to his God unless he fulfills the purpose of his creation by obeying God's command to have dominion and to subdue?

THAT IS WHY we ought to study our environment. Such study will help us to subdue it. And then whether our scientific method be called a policy or a creed, it will be useful in dealing with nature and it will help to some extent in subduing it. Such a study of our environment can teach us how God works in nature. It can keep us from misusing the resources God has given us when we learn the results of such exploitation. In our day, in spite of the accumulation of knowledge about nature, we are afraid. Why? Because although man has discovered some of the secrets of the atom, he is not using these secrets to subdue the earth. He is using them to cow, to frighten, to subdue the peoples of other nations. This is not the purpose for which man was created.

Yet many Christians are afraid of education and learning whether it be called Science or Literature. They are afraid of any effort on the part of man to push back the bounds of the unknown. They fear that some ideas they have concerning the teachings of the Bible will be refuted. Consequently, instead of joining in this quest for knowledge they enjoy their ignorance. They cannot sift the erroneous from the true. They make a few pat remarks about man being sinful and unable to read nature aright. Those who so belittle man's God-given task serve to bring but little glory to their God.

We are living in the scientific age. We ought to be thankful for that. Some of us feel that scientists are too dominant in our civilization. We all know that there is a corrosion of a proper sense of values and that we are too materialistic. In spite of these faults of our present day, however, we should appreciate it. We should remember that it is at this present time that we are witnessing the power or ability of man to subdue the earth and have dominion over it to a greater extent than ever before. This power and dominion is far from complete. I suppose it never will be complete because of sin, but so long as God gives us life upon this earth, we His creatures must strive on, ever on, and thus fulfill the purpose for which we have been created.

The Teaching of Doctrine in the Christian School

by Edwin Walhout

THERE ARE SOME HIGH SCHOOLS in the Christian school system of the Reformed community which do not teach a course in doctrine at all. They feel that a course in Reformed Doctrine should not be incorporated into the scholastic curriculum. Various reasons can be suggested for such a position, the main one being that the Christian schools are not agencies of the church. Explanation of Reformed doctrine is the duty of the church, not of the school. It is understandable that Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and other parochial schools teach courses in the catechism of their particular church. But the Christian schools of the Reformed community, religious though not parochial, have no right to teach officially the doctrines of any church to all the pupils.

On the other hand, most Christian High Schools do have a course in Reformed Doctrine. Their justification for including doctrine in the curriculum is that it is the climax of the entire Bible curriculum throughout the grades. A formal course in doctrine forms the culmination of many years of Bible study. Without such a course something very necessary would be lacking. All the preceding courses of Bible which a student has taken have emphasized in varying degree the historical approach: Old Testament history, the life of Christ, the acts of the Apostles, the journeys of Paul. Faith, however, must be more than the historical faith, and the Bible curriculum requires a final course which traces not so much the history of God's people but the history of God's revelation. There ought to be a course which *interprets* history and shows its meaning, which lays bare the history of redemption, the "fulness of the times." And that means a formal course in doctrine.

These two positions reveal a dilemma which every high school Bible teacher confronts. Should he teach doctrine at all? And if he does, how must he do so without infringing upon the rights and duties of the church?

Current practices of teaching doctrine find the teacher either using one of the existing expositions of Reformed doctrine as a basic textbook or developing his own outline of doctrine more or less according to the traditional six loci of theology. As might be expected, this situation has produced a wide variety of senior Bible courses in the Christian High Schools. Each school determines its own policy, and each teacher is largely responsible for determining the method and content of the course. There does not seem to be general satisfaction with any one of the existing books on doctrine, probably because they were not designed specifically as textbooks for high school students, and possibly because they duplicate catechetical materials too much. Further, regardless of the excellence of the teacher, a course of this importance ought not to be subjected to the whims of each individual teacher. There ought to be some standardization of the course throughout the entire Christian school system.

I should like to suggest a few ideas which ought to characterize such a course.

1. *It should utilize the Bible as the basic textbook.* The course, after all, is a course in Bible. Its purpose is to explain the doctrinal teachings of the Bible, and therefore it should be done directly from the Bible itself rather than indirectly from a book about the Bible. High school students are not always convinced that the doctrines they have learned are Biblical. They do believe them, but they also know that other denominations have different doctrines than their own, and they are not sure which is truly Biblical. The Baptists quote the Bible to prove their point, the Reformed quote it to prove something quite contrary — and even the devil can quote it to prove his point! And thus there often proves to be a gap between doctrine and the Bible.

The error is in methodology. If the doctrines are drawn directly from the Bible itself, that uncertainty will not develop. The Bible is not simply a series of prooftexts for doctrines but it is the source book for them. There is certainly a place for doctrinal teaching on the abstract level, but it is hardly ideal for the senior high school in a scholastic setting.

2. *It should inculcate a respect for the orthodox interpretation of the Bible.* The Bible is an ancient document, and our generation is not the first to attempt an explanation of it. And down through the years the main pattern of Biblical truth has been clarified for us. We need not begin anew, for we possess the treasures of our fathers. It would be more than presumptuous for us to reject the in

sights of our fathers and to pretend to construct an entirely new system of interpretation.

Hence the course in doctrine ought to acquaint the high school seniors not only with the traditionally accepted form of doctrine, but also with the errors of interpretation which have appeared through the ages. Our times are more than sufficiently confused and unsettled because of scientific and economic progress. We must take pains to avoid adding religious and doctrinal confusion also.

We ought, therefore, to beware of the tendency to substitute modern "thought-forms" for the historic terminology of orthodox theology. We need likewise to beware of the current tendency to substitute new meanings for traditional terms. Scripture can be made meaningful and significant without doing that. We do not need theological revolution, we need theological revitalization. We always need that.

3. *It should be built upon the previous courses in Bible which the students have taken.* By the time a student has become a senior in high school he has a great deal of Bible instruction, especially in Biblical history. The course in doctrine must utilize that instruction. History and doctrine need not be separated so completely as is often done.

God did, after all, reveal those doctrines in history, and often in concrete historical events. There is an historical sequence in doctrine, a progressive unfolding of God's plan. Why ignore that historical process? The Incarnation, for example, could not very well have happened before it actually did, for it came in the "fulness of time." The historical preparation for the Incarnation is important for the doctrinal understanding of it.

Thus a correlation ought to be made between Bible History and Bible Doctrine. Without that correlation the student will not perceive the true intent of Scripture.

4. *It should be pedagogically sound.* The course in Doctrine should employ the techniques which have proven effective for high school teaching. The vocabulary should be carefully chosen, so that the average student can follow it. Advanced theological terminology need not be avoided completely, but each new term should be explained carefully. In fact, a considerable portion of the course will probably be the elucidation of historic theological terms.

It will be necessary to generalize a little more than a theologian likes to do. The high school student needs the broad, basic understandings which will enable him to see each doctrine in the total Biblical perspective. These broad perspectives must receive the primary emphasis rather than the detailed analysis.

The course ought to follow a unitary plan of organization. Each unit should be complete in itself, containing clear objectives of understanding. These understandings should be definite, objective, vivid, "concrete," independent of personal whims. It should be possible for the student to express each understanding clearly and coherently in his own way. Provision must be made for adequate reviewing, and tests necessarily must be of the essay type rather than the objective type.

The course ought to be standardized to a great extent, but yet be adaptable to each teacher's own background, training, character, and methodology. It should be found teachable by any competent teacher.

5. *It ought to adapt the method of Biblical Theology, (sometimes called History of Revelation or History of Salvation) to the high school level.* It seems to me that this is the only method which will retain the characteristics mentioned above. It would be set up somewhat as follows: Passages of doctrinal importance would be selected and printed in full for the perusal of each student. Then, immediately afterward would appear the explanation of the meaning and implications of that passage, the exegesis. Parallel passages and related teachings from other parts of Scripture would be introduced as necessary, always written out in full. (If such a passage is pedagogically valuable, it is worth writing out in full, rather than simply providing a reference to the chapter and verse.) Then would follow a section explaining the various errors which have appeared in the interpretation of that particular passage.

In this way the Bible itself would remain the basic textbook, even though a complete copy would not be used. Further, the doctrine would be derived directly from the Bible, and thus the danger of a gap between the two avoided. The acceptable interpretation or doctrinal formulation would be impressed vividly upon the student by the contrasting erroneous interpretations. Thus a wholesome understanding and respect for historic orthodoxy would be provided.

One of the greatest advantages of such an adaptation of the method of Biblical Theology is that it will be built substantially upon preceding Bible courses. The students will actually be studying many of the same events with which they have become familiar in past years. This time, however, they will be taught to see clearly the doctrinal significance of these events, and they will gradually perceive the meaning and purpose of God's great plan of salvation as it was worked out in Biblical history. In this way doctrine and history will be inseparably wedded rather than artificially divorced, and the students' background in Bible will be continually utilized.

Further, this method of Biblical Theology is very adaptable to a unitary method of constructing a

Teaching of Doctrine — Continued

course. Each selected passage would provide a separate unit. The varying interpretations of each passage would provide clear objectives of understandings which would be both teachable and testable. Thus an adaptation of this method would appear to be entirely consistent with effective pedagogy on the high school level. As a matter of fact, it should not be too difficult to harmonize this method with the traditional six loci of theology.

Finally, this method would resolve the dilemma of whether or not to teach a course in doctrine in the Christian High School. Using this method the teacher would not be inculcating the beliefs of any particular denomination, even though his teaching would be shaped and guided by the historic orthodox interpretation of Scripture. He would be teaching doctrine *scholastically* not *ecclesiastically,* and although there would still be some duplication of catechetical materials, the methods would be entirely different. It would be Bible Doctrine, not Church Doctrine.

It seems to me that such an adaptation of the method of Biblical Theology is the logical plan for developing a high school course in doctrine.

Pages From the Past

For the Centennial Year — a collection of contemporary accounts and documents which reflect something of the origins and developing life of the Christian Reformed Church. Selected and edited by Dr. George Stob.

Gijsbert Haan's Story

In the December issue of *The Reformed Journal* a beginning was made of the story of Gijsbert Haan, more than any other person the moving spirit in the secession from the Reformed Dutch Church which led to the organization of the Christian Reformed Church. This account, in Haan's *Stem Eens Belasterden,* is here continued and completed.

HAVING LIVED IN VRIESLAND a year and a half, it appeared better to me to take up the trade in which I had been trained in Grand Rapids, and to that end I settled there in 1851. From the very first moment of my arrival I had to experience opposition, especially from the Consistory, this being the result of the misrepresentations of Rev. Ypma. Some weeks after my arrival things got no better, as a result of the following: It was time for the election of Consistory members, and though my membership certificate had not yet been handed in, because Rev. Ypma had ventured to use expressions in it which I wanted in due time and place to speak about, so that I was not yet a member of the congregation, it occurred to me that it would be well to see once how this went in America and who would be chosen. When the ballots were counted it appeared that Dalman had received the largest number of votes for elder, but not yet the half of the members present. Mr. Yong, an elder in the First Church, said to me: "Dalman is elder." I answered simply: "So! But this would not be the case in the Netherlands, where he would have to have a decided majority of votes, and he doesn't even have half." "That makes no difference here," was the answer. "Whoever ha the most is the elder even if there were only fiv votes."

Before the installation took place announcemer was made to the congregation that the church vis itors were to come on a certain day, and if there wa anyone who had any matter to bring forward, h should then come to the church building and preser what was on his mind. When the day arrived made use of this opportunity, and found Revs. Van der Meulen and Van Raalte as visitors. When was my turn and I was asked if I had anything t say, I asked the reverend gentlemen to look at m membership certificate. Rev. Vander Meulen, ha ing seen it, angrily threw it towards Rev. Va Raalte, and Van Raalte threw it with "It is shame" across the table, after which Mr. Yong toc it up and threw it in the stove. Thereupon Va Raalte said: "Haan, do you want to be accepted a a member of the congregation?" "Yes," I an swered. "Well now," it was said, "that thing, tha membership certificate means nothing. From no on you are a member of this congregation." I ex pressed thanks and said: "Now that I am reco nized as a member, I have something to bring the attention of the brothers, and that is: I ha maintained that the votes which Dalman obtaine were not enough, since they did not amount to half part of the membership, and for a lawf election a decided majority is required." The vi

tors agreed to this, and the Consistory and Dalman were informed that the votes recorded for him were not enough, so that another election had to be held. And at this election, which took place the week following, Dalman and I were chosen elders with a majority of the votes.

Not long after my election and installation difficulties arose, since at the first meeting of the Consistory, the member H. Brink came with objections against Dalman, charging him with holding to the doctrine of general atonement, but Dalman did not want to express himself on this matter. At a later meeting J. Eleveld came with the same charge, and the behavior of Dalman was as it had been before. At still another meeting A. Hernst came with the same complaint, and Dalman again did as before, refusing to declare himself though he was urged to do so. This behavior of Dalman caused a bit of suspicion, even though everything remained quiet for a time. Classis was about to meet, and at Consistory I was appointed as delegate.

At this meeting a member of the Holland congregation came with a letter he had received from Milwaukee, containing the question: If it was permissible to receive as church members those who were known to belong to the order of Freemasons. He wanted the judgment of the brethren as to how he should answer this question. But the unreasonable and unseemly treatment given to this man, at that time unknown to me, by some of the ministers present, angered me exceedingly. "What is your intention," he was asked, "in bringing this letter here to Classis?" "Nothing other," was the answer, "than to hear the judgment of the brethren." "No," it was replied, "you want to throw a bomb upon the Dutch Reformed Church," and this was accompanied with many derogatory expressions. I entered the discussion, and said: "Brothers, this evil, Freemasonry, is so general in America that many ministers and members also of the Dutch Reformed Church belong to this order. And this, together with all the other unReformed things that are found, makes it desirable, in my judgment, that we should be a church by ourselves here, though in union with the Seceded Church in the Netherlands, and abandon our union with the Dutch Reformed Church. What need have we of it?" etc.

Now there was no lack of opposition, not so much from the members, but it was especially from the side of the ministers. Rev. Van Raalte, taking note of the dissatisfaction among the people and trying to set them at rest, began with the question: "What is Freemasonry, anyhow? A secret! Yes, a childish secret. People want something secretive. Well now, here we have that childish thing. And that they give each other the helping hand in trouble, isn't that a praiseworthy thing?" etc. And from that time on there was hardly a Classis meeting at which it was not said: "Why can't we be a people by ourselves," and this was occasioned by the fact that every now and then something else about the Dutch Reformed Church was revealed which had not been known before. The truth of this narrative can be confirmed by many in the Holland colony, since there was much talk about this weighty subject, and the Classis meeting was open to the public, so that there were always many interested visitors. . . .

BUT NOW we return to Grand Rapids, where the time had come for a change in the Consistory, and when J. Gelock and another were elected as deacons. I indicated earlier that the attitude of Dalman had caused suspicion. Now something happened which caused the smoldering fire to burst into flame, and that was this: Rev. Van Raalte came one time to serve the congregation. At the Consistory meeting he said: "Brethren, there are so few books among the people. There are some books printed in our language, don't you think you should have some?" "Naturally," was the answer. "Which are they?" First, there was Bunyan, then there was *Pearls From Luther,* and thirdly there was Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted.* We answered that we knew Bunyan well enough, had much respect for Luther, but Baxter was altogether unknown to us. Then it was said: "If Bunyan is silver, Baxter is gold," and upon that recommendation we put in a large order. The fire was kindled already when at Classis (when there was mention made again of the fact that in the Dutch Reformed Church general atonement was taught) Van Raalte said: "Yes, what shall I say? I confess election and believe in atonement, but must acknowledge that I cannot reconcile them." To which it was answered that although personal election and general atonement could not well be reconciled, personal atonement and election could be so reconciled.

The above-mentioned book of Baxter came into many hands, and with it the fire that made the flame break out on all sides; for in it there was found general atonement and all that goes with it, from beginning to end; and this came out of the bosom of the Church. In it was also found the teaching that God created the devils, which must indeed follow when Baxter teaches that when the angels fell these were given into the hands of the devil to be punished. J. Gelock, I, and others disliked the book, but Dalman, Van Driele [a prominent elder in the Grand Rapids church —Ed.] and a few others approved of it, because Van Raalte had said it was a good book, and he knew. No wonder that from that time on it was said: "I hold with Haan!" "And I with Dalman!" And what made matters worse was that some of the ministers who served the congregation here, did not abstain from

fanning the flame in their preaching by using expressions in the spirit of Baxter on the pulpit.

In this time of trouble and division the meeting of Classis drew near. At the Consistory meeting before Classis, I, being President, asked: "Brethren, is there anything with reference to us that has to be dealt with at Classis?" "Yes," Dalman answered, "we must ask the judgment of the assembly about Baxter's *Call.*" Thereupon I indicated that this was just what I wanted; and with that instruction Van Driele and I left for Zeeland, where the meeting was then held. The church building there was filled with the curious. The news of what was to take place had been spread. Some had already ventured to pronounce judgment upon me, while others, and many of them, who also rejected Baxter with disdain, were desirous to hear what the assembly would do. Since I knew that the opposition was strong, I had taken along the books of Erskine, Marshall [Scotch and English divines beloved by the Dutch Seceders —Ed.], Comrie [defender of the orthodoxy of Dort, in 18th century Holland —Ed.], the Formulas of Unity [the three Reformed Creeds —Ed.] and the Bible, since I judged that these were quite able to expose Baxter's errors. However, I had no need of it, for when it was made known what the Consistory of Grand Rapids wanted, the President [Rev. C. Vander Meulen —Ed.] said: "Brethren, you hear the request of Grand Rapids. I now want to be honest and speak out. As for me, I had read Baxter on the rest of the saints with pleasure, and my wife had read Baxter's *Call* with blessing, whereupon I circulated this book without looking into it carefully, but when so much complaint arose concerning Baxter I read it myself and I have had to say: No, Baxter, you are wrong." Thereupon the Secretary [Van Raalte —Ed.] said: "That was my experience, too. I had read it, indeed, but superficially, and when criticism arose, I read it carefully and had to say: Baxter, you are wrong!"[1] Thereupon I said: "Well, then, to be brief, here are the Formulas of Unity, does Baxter agree with them?" "No," answered the President, "I, at least, would not like to defend the book." "Then Baxter is rejected as unReformed," I said, and with that the matter was concluded.

1. Art. 9 of the Classis meeting of Sept. 26, 1853, reads: "Objections are brought in against the little work of Baxter, entitled: 'Call to the Unconverted,' which some ministers had circulated, as defending a reconciliation of all men with God, or a doctrine of universal grace. Other writings of Baxter are presented, from which passages are read aloud clearly teaching election, etc. However, the ministers declare that there are a few expressions in the little work of Baxter which they themselves do not dare to defend or to employ" (*Classis Holland Minutes*, 1848-1858, p. 144).

If the ministers had subsequently acted honorabl and no more circulated Baxter, the people migh have been set at rest, but since they began agai the following day to hand out and circulate the boo as much as possible, people saw themselves deceive by their declarations at Classis, and this fed th flames of fire anew. When, a bit later, I wrote letter to our Counsellor about congregational ma ters, I appended a postscript indicating what I ha heard concerning the renewed circulation of Baxte expressing the hope that this was not true since i that case I should feel compelled to oppose it a much as possible. Even though I was careful t express this in the mildest form, it was neverth less called a declaration of war by another ministe

ABOUT this time we agreed to call a ministe with the result that Rev. H. G. Klijn of Mi waukee was called, and he accepted. From th time on the conflict in the Consistory was not evident anymore, since Rev. Klijn often appear to lean to our side. But the conflict with the neig boring ministers continued, and they secretly i fluenced the other Consistory members, so that t conflict was being fostered more under cover. Wh it came time for Classis the question was asked wh we had to bring up. It was judged, since the a tempt was often made to exist as a separate bod though in union with the Seceded Church of t Netherlands, and this was not obtainable, that w should cordially ask the Classis to at least ent into correspondence with that Church, so that the would be no estrangement from those with whc we were so intimately and closely bound. But th request, no matter how fair and desirable, aga met with strong opposition. "We could just as w enter into correspondence with the church at B tavia," the President cried. Indeed, it went far that some declared that we should never ha seceded in the Netherlands but continued wi preaching. But the rest were not so ripe for th as was the Doctor [apparently Van Raalte —E who made the remark; the majority was still t much attached to that church and approved t proposal of Grand Rapids. . . .

At this meeting (in 1854) it was necessary appoint delegates to the Synod which was about be held, and for this a minister and elder were a pointed, the latter a person who couldn't understa a word of English but who had the respect of t people, which the ministers had lost. It was hop that with this man it would be possible to gain son thing and to restore what had been lost. A sh time after that we were, as Consistory, engaged conversation at the home of Rev. Klijn, when son body came in, a student from New Brunswick, w had attended the Synod and left sooner than did delegates. He reported much about the meeti

among others, that it was again decided to invite and admit to the Lord's Supper ministers and members of various denominations, about which this student and others among us were glad, but this was not the case with the majority among us.[2]

It was decided to let this matter rest until the following Classis. When that time approached, Rev. Klijn was not well and couldn't go along. Van Raalte, who had made a journey of some 100 miles, was also ill. I had to attend this meeting as our delegate, which was marked by the excessive anger of the President, the Clerk, and a few other members, occasioned by the following: After we discussed several matters, I asked the President, who had been our delegate to Synod, to give us a report of what had happened there. "Oh, yes," he answered, and turning to the other delegate he said: "Brother Vande Luister, suppose you do it." After a bit of resistance that good man began to tell us that he had lodged by people with whom he could speak the Holland language; how good he was received there, so that he believed these people were children of God, and that he had also met ministers who still spoke the Holland language. In brief, he had had a very pleasant journey. After this report was finished, the President took up and said: "Yes, brothers, it is so; they are more orthodox than we," and he told us a few more things about the journey and the hospitality of the people, and with that the report was ended. But we, who desired to hear more of the work of the Synod, said: "We are pleased that brother ..... was so well received and had such a pleasant journey, but we would like to know what was done at Synod." Now it was said: "What shall I say about that? They spoke about so many things, I don't know what I ought to report." I said: "Just make a beginning, and it will come more easily," but it appeared that he had nothing to say. Upon my question: "Wasn't there a decision about inviting to the Lord's Supper those who live outside of the communion of the Church?" That question made it clear to him. "Yes," he answered, but no more, so that I had to continue asking, and the "Yes," sounded louder and louder, until I asked whether this was the practice of the Reformed Church?[3] Then his anger reached a climax, and he exploded: "In the Netherlands, in the Seceded Church, we elevated ourselves to an evil arrogance by saying: We are the Church," etc. A deacon, though not a member of the Classis, referred to Art. 28 of the Consistory [relating to the true church — Ed.], but got for answer: "You are hopelessly stupid!" And to complete the picture the other delegate stood up [apparently the pious elder delegate — Ed.], amazed at what he had heard, and said: "But I am not in agreement with this decision of Synod." Now it was plain that the good man didn't know anything about what had been decided at Synod. Hereupon it became unbearable, and President and the Clerk, taking up the books, left, crying: "I don't want to remain any longer." [For another, and different, account, see *Classis Holland Minutes,* Art. 9, pp. 179-181 — Ed.]

. . . I INDICATED earlier that since the arrival of Rev. Klijn the conflict in the Consistory was not so open, but now something happened that again fanned it into flame, namely: It was again time to choose Consistory members, and we do not deny that all took it up for their own party. The Consistory made a double nomination (let it be born in mind that the Consistory decided that if anybody was not chosen by majority vote, there would be no revote . . . and it was also decided that no meeting would be legal if the majority of the congregation were not present). When the ballots were opened it appeared that Dalman had 23 votes, and thus did not have the half part of the members present. The Consistory therefore decided that another nomination should be made and an election held, but no matter how hard the Domine tried, it was not possible to get a sufficient number of members present for voting, so that the Consistory was forced to make use of the freedom given to them in the church order, and with secret ballots elected Gezon, Jonkers, and VandenBerg. Two deacons, although they didn't say anything about this at the Consistory meeting, went the next day to see the Domine, and making use of his timidity, said: If Gezon and not Dalman came into office there would be many unhappy consequences. A Consistory meeting was held, the dangers were set forth, and the elected men were kindly asked to decline their appointments. Gelock and I protested the action of the Domine, but he succeeded in getting his way at last. The brothers declined, having been distressed by the disorderly procedure of the Domine. Now there was to be another election. Gelock and I continued to protest against the whole procedure as unlawful, being unable for that reason to take part in the election, neither the members who were united with us. The result

2. The minutes of the General Synod of 1855 record the following on this matter: *Resolved*: That the Professors of the Theological Seminary, and the Students of the same, be invited to unite with the Synod in the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. *Resolved*: That the invitation be extended to the President, Professors and pious students in Rutgers College, and that a general invitation be given to all the Christian people in this city" (Cf. *Classis Holland Minutes,* 1848-1858, p. 180).

3. Though not clearly indicated, it seems that Haan addressed these questions to the President, Rev. C. Vander Meulen, one of the delegates to the Synod.

Pages from the Past — Continued

was that Dalman was chosen, which election was branded as unlawful by our protest.

This matter, therefore, was to come before Classis, and since it was in the interest of the Dutch Reformed Church that the leaders at this meeting should legalize this illegal action, we didn't entertain much hope for a favorable decision. The time of the meeting approached, and we came together at Zeeland, and it was here that the unlawful procedure was justified and Dalman was placed in office. [For the account of the Classis' proceedings in this confusing matter, see *Classis Holland Minutes*, pp. 187ff. —Ed.]. We submitted to this judgment under protest, asking for a recording of our protest, but one of the ministers flung at us: "In America people don't protest; but if a matter doesn't please one he goes away." The Lord, who always achieves His goal, had another purpose with us. It was His wisdom to allow that at this meeting steps were taken which carried weighty consequences after them.

As was customary, there was discussion at this meeting again about the Dutch Reformed Church, what had already come to light, and as before it was asked: Why can't we be *one* body with the Seceded Church in the Netherlands, since it becomes more and more evident that there is much in the Dutch Reformed Church that is strange to the Reformed Church? [*i.e.*, the historic Gereformeerde Kerk of the Netherlands — Ed.] It was at this point that one of the ministers called out with a loud voice: "Brothers, I request that a Day of Prayer be held against this spirit of doubt of the Dutch Reformed Church, this spirit of the devil!" and other such pretty expressions. After awhile it became clear that this man only brought forth what had been put into him, and he functioned, therefore, as a machine.

To make it short, it was decided to hold a day of prayer against this spirit of the devil, and the day was set. Every one can easily understand that what happened did not make a favorable impression on us, nor on many members of the congregation. the following Sunday people still came to church, but it cannot be denied that they had to force themselves to it. Gelock spoke of wanting to give up his office, which I advised him not to do, though I, for myself, didn't know what to do either. Meanwhile the day appointed for prayer drew near. The day before Rev. Klijn came to visit me and said: "Haan, you are coming to church tomorrow, aren't you?" My answer was: "How do you dare ask this, Domine? since the Lord is not a God of confusion but of order, for we would be warring against each other in prayer, you praying against the spirit of doubt as that of the devil, and I asking that the Lord would more and more open the eyes of His people, so that they might see the peril for themselves and their children; and thus we would stand with swords drawn against each other, and that before the throne of God!" "No," he said, "I will not speak about anything." I replied: "You won't? You, who seem to have such great need of prayer; you who are the cause of the fact that tomorrow in so many congregations there will be complaint to God about the spirit of the devil. Don't you shame yourself for saying that you won't speak about anything, and do you want now to leave this to others? Shame on you, Domine! No, come out in the open light tomorrow and show that you meant what you said when you spoke at Classis; that's what you must do." "No Haan," he said in turn, "I will not speak about anything." "And I will stay quietly at home," was my answer, upon which he, sighing, left me.

The next day the Reverend got stuck in his sermon, while the other ministers gave themselves free rein on that day, by representing the doubters [of the union — Ed.] before the congregation as followers of the devil. It was now getting to be very difficult, since it was not permitted to protest and raising questions was cause for appointing a day of prayer against it. What is more, Rev. Van Raalte had asked at the last Classis: "Am I then such a Field[4] when I say that the Dutch Reformed Church is good, that I cannot be trusted?" We were supposed to blindly believe what was said even though we saw its contradiction with our own eyes.

It was impossible to continue in that way. I thought about the condition of the union, namely, "If the Dutch Reformed Church was not, in doctrine and government, entirely as had been decided at the Synod of Dordrecht, that people could then bid a fraternal adieu to that church," and decided to make use of it. I wrote a letter to the Consistory resigning my membership in that church as long as they were united to the Dutch Reformed Church. I had not spoken with Gelock for several days, and therefore did not know how he stood on this matter. I had just put my letter away in the desk drawer when the Domine came, and he said directly: "Haan! You have some influence on brother Gelock, oh, please do your best to get him to change his mind." "Did Gelock resign his office?" I asked. "No," he replied, "he has seceded, and I pray that

4. No doubt referring to Richard Field, English clergyman and theological writer of the 16th century, famed for his ability as a disputant, and writer of a work on the Church which rates "as one of the grandest monuments of polemic divinity in the English language."

you try to get him to reverse his decision, because I don't know where to hide because of the anxieties that take hold of me. Oh, please, do your best!" "Domine, this is a very difficult matter for me," I answered, and meanwhile opened my desk drawer, took my letter of secession out of it and gave it to the Reverend. "Oh! Oh! what is going to happen," and weeping thus he left my house.

This spread around all over as quickly as a flame, and some were glad, but others grieved. Now we stood there alone; but this didn't last long, because soon others followed our example. As I think back on all this today, how small our beginning was, and how this handful grew into hundreds, yes, thousands, then I am moved — as others may also say — to cry out: "This has come from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes!" But, to return to the story: We now gathered with each other on Sundays to read a sermon and to see what the Lord might do further. We might meet together with pleasure, and the Lord did not leave Himself without witness. Now and then our number was increased, and there appeared signs and proofs that a very large number was ready to go this way with us. After this the secession began to break out in other congregations, too, so that it had already become a large number.

For a considerable period of time we continued happily with our small group, not having spoken at all with the Domine, and we had no need for doing so as long as the Reverend took the same position. But what happened? On a certain afternoon there came the daughter of one of my lady friends (who, though not a seceder, was kindly disposed to it) with greetings from mother and the request if I wouldn't come over that evening, Rev. Klijn would also be there, to speak about church matters. After thinking it over a bit I said: "Tell your mother that I would prefer not to come, because that would be like putting a new patch on an old garment, and then the rent would be greater." After she had left with this message, the mother herself came, urging that Gelock and I should come, because Rev. Klijn also wanted to secede and would be there with his Consistory. I couldn't refuse this, and gave my consent to this meeting. When we arrived that evening, we met the Domine and two elders, Vanden Berg and Van Zee, and much was said about the faults in the Dutch Reformed Church. The above-named elders, who had also lived in the East, agreed fully, though they didn't show that they had come to a decision, and we had a good time together. A few days later I had a visit from the Domine, and after we had exchanged greetings, the Reverend said: "Haan! Now you don't have to come to me, but I come to you and ask: will you accept me as a member of your people, because that is the people with which I am one!" "Domine," I answered, "do you know what you are doing, and have you counted the cost?" "Yes" he answered, "the Lord has so taught me my duty that I neither can nor may remain behind, and I have also asked my wife if she would also go this way, and she, too, said: with all my heart; therefore I come now with the question: Will your people accept me?" "Very gladly," I cried to the Reverend, "and I dare say that in the name of all." After that we talked about one thing and another, that the Domine should make this known to the congregation on Sunday, and that thereafter we hoped to discuss how to proceed further, after which the Reverend left.

The following Sunday was a day of confusion in Reverend's congregation, because when he tried to ascend the pulpit the Consistory hindered him. This occasioned so great a disturbance that people outside of the church could see it because of the wild movements in and out of the church. Since I didn't live far from the church, I was made aware of it by passers-by who stood still with their eyes turned toward the church; and now I, too, wanted to go and see, since the intention of Rev. Klijn was known to me and I could well understand that something exceptional had happened. But when I entered I was astounded at the sight that greeted my eyes: I saw a milling crowd, the Domine in the middle of the people and speaking with them about the behavior of the Consistory; the Consistory standing around the pulpit to safeguard it, and also raising their voices; the people shouted one this and another that; in a word, it was a chaos of confusion. I asked the Domine to go home, and since I soon had enough of this, I also went back home. After this it wasn't long before my house was filled with followers of the Domine, and that there was no lack of things to talk about can well be imagined.

THE RESULT of all this was that a large number now seceded and joined with us, so that we found it necessary to find a place for our meetings, and for that reason hired a large hall, until such time as the church, which we decided to build, should be ready. I will not mention here the further shameful action of the Consistory, since this has before been made public by brother Gelock. From this time on everything went wonderfully good, there was a high spirit among the people, and no worry about the salary of the minister. There was a willing spirit for giving for all that was necessary, and we were delivered from endless trouble. For a considerable time everything went well. There were already many congregations organized and it was evident that soon many others would be added, to the annoyance of those who opposed us. Though at first the people reviled and made a good deal of noise, after awhile they changed

their tone. As the serpent came to Eve, so also a minister came, one of our strongest opponents, to pay a visit to Rev. Klijn for old time's sake. He did not want to live in enmity, "for even though we are separated ecclesiastically, still we are brothers," he said, and he repeated this visit again without speaking about the secession, etc. After awhile they became quite congenial, the conversation turned on the ministers and their salaries, etc. One ventured to shoot an arrow, and said: "Yes, dear brother! You are now with that little group, and they will surely pay you, but you are old, and when it comes time for you to die, who is going to take care of your wife. That little group can't support a minister and also a widow. We have a fund for that, which gives generous endowments to widows of ministers." The Domine was so much moved by this that he began to break, and when this became apparent, it was enough for that time; the visitor left. But after that there were more visits, also from other brethren, until Rev. Klijn was completely won over. He now wrote directly to the minister at Zeeland what he had decided, but kept it from our knowledge, but we nonetheless learned about it, so that we could take measures in order to obviate much harm.

As I said before, it was our intention to build a church, and we were waiting only for lumber. The Domine had written to Zeeland on Wednesday and made known his intention to return; and on Thursday he came to me with: "Haan! did the lumber for the church come yet?" "Yes, Domine," I answered. "Then the building will begin very soon?" "We hope on Monday," I answered. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday passed, but no information from the Domine. Saturday evening we visited him, spoke with each other about various things, but noticed nothing. When it was 10 o'clock, I said: "Domine! we must have a Consistory meeting on Monday!" "Oh, why?" was the answer. "There are matters concerning which we must consult the congregation, but it should first be dealt with at Consistory." Now the urge was too strong for the Reverend, and he said: "I had better say it then; I cannot any longer go with you in this way; I cannot forsake my brothers; I have decided to return." He was asked how this was to be reconciled with his avowal that the Lord had been light and counsel to him in his secession, as he had said to us and to the whole congregation. Thereupon he said: "Satan changed himself into an angel of light, and deceived me." And after much speaking he added: "My decision is made, and I will preach for you tomorrow, and thereafter catechize the children, if you want it, but beyond that no more."

Though we had known about this decision before, we were nevertheless disheartened, and most of all because the Reverend once called God's work what now went with him for the work of the devil. We gave him answer: "You may preach for us tomorrow as before, but on this condition, that you do not make mention either in your preaching or in the prayer of the matter you have reported to us; and as concerns the children, we hope to do this work ourselves." And with that the matter was for the time ended. Rev. Klijn went his way, but to no good end; and not for this reason that our congregation was reduced on that account, because people had too much disgust for his dishonesty and also not on this account, that the Reverend was taken up as minister of the local Dutch Reformed Church, because that church didn't want him either; now that the goal [of Klijn's defection —Ed.] was reached. The local church took the Reverend for a supply preacher, and thereafter wandering from one congregation to another became the reward for his abominable behavior.[5]

MEANWHILE, we made a beginning with the building of our church, even though we were reviled by our enemies, who thought we were now done for, and said: "What are these feeble Jews doing?" But our language was: "We will build, the God of heaven, he will prosper us." That also came true. The first building, becoming too small to hold the large number of hearers, a large and costly building was erected, with a fine parsonage, and without any debt remaining on it, so that no matter what others might say or judge, we declare to all men: "Having obtained help from God we stand to this very day."

. . . . I ask myself sometimes: Why is it that people fight against the seceders and the secession? Is it because they have something against the persons of these people? No, since they are willing to associate with them. Is it because they judge secession a wrong thing? Not that either, because that is no strange thing in America. Is it then because of the strenuous Calvinism, the doctrine of free sovereign grace, which is there taught [*i.e.*, in the seceded churches —Ed.]? If that is so, let us then despair of any reunion, because that conflict was already joined in paradise and will continually throw up slime and mud. I think now that I have said enough for the enlightenment of the impartial. . .

Grand Rapids, October 1871 G. HAAN

5. There were others who defected and returned to the Dutch Reformed Church. One was Gijsbert Haan, the very same person who writes these things, and who returned to the Dutch Reformed Church a few years after the beginning of the secession because he was not permitted to continue in the office of elder in the seceded church. Later, in another turn of loyalty, he rejoined the seceded church, of which he was a member when he wrote this brochure.

NDERSONVILLE. *By MacKinlay Kantor.* 767 pp. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1955. $5.00.

eviewed by STEVE J. VANDER EELE, Instructor in English, Calvin ollege.

Andersonville, MacKinlay Kantor's ulitzer prize-winning novel of 1955, primarily the account of the life of nion prisoners confined to the Con-derate prison camp of Andersonville, eorgia, during the last eighteen onths of the Civil War. But it is ore. We are shown also how the ar disrupted the civilized life of the ation. The intrusion of the war up-the life of Northern communities d families is depicted through repre-ntative episodes in the lives of typi-l Andersonville prisoners. The shat-ring effect on the South is portrayed rough the progressive degeneration a model plantation owned by Ira laffey, whose land it was that had en requisitioned for the camp. It is tale of incredible suffering and mis-y. Fifty-thousand prisoners at one me or another are confined to this ghteen-acre parallelogram of pine unks. Fourteen thousand of these risoners die and thousands more are ined in health because of the incom-etence, stupidity, and military iner-a of the authorities responsible for e camp. The prisoners suffer from alnutrition — from their scanty diet f bitter, woody bread, wormy beans, nd rancid pork. They are compelled drink from a limited and polluted ater supply, and to breathe the stench f the quagmire of human excrescence hich drenches the area for miles round. They are victims also of the eign of terror imposed upon them by band of toughs who sadistically de-poil old and new prisoners of what-ver belongings they had succeeded in etaining. The gradual starvation, nd the resulting diseases and apathy, ombine to reduce the prisoners from nen to toothless, gibbering pulps of asted flesh and rotting bones.

Books about Andersonville are not ew. Some of us have read about his camp in our adolescent years. What is striking about this particular ccount, however, is the twentieth-cen-ury interpretation of a nineteenth-entury event. I should like to men-ion several areas in which the narra-ive has been significantly influenced by twentieth-century literary practices and philosophical judgments.

There is, in this novel, first of all, a penchant for that brutality and sadism which our century has experienced more than any other and which our authors have learned to narrate with such deadly precision. To Kantor the Civil War is not the last of the wars between gentlemen but rather the first of the modern wars. Kantor has learned from his predecessors first, how to anesthetize, and then how to probe, lance, and explore this brutality with clinical dispassion under the intense lights of an unsparing realism.

Another concern which links *Andersonville* to other twentieth-century fiction is the sociological interest of the author. Steeped in forty years of research about the Civil War, Kantor reconstructs for us the panorama of mid-nineteenth-century America, of the world of Currier and Ives, of the period of the McGuffey readers. He reconstructs for us the homes and communities from which came the soldier sons of millers, artisans, mechanics, blacksmiths, immigrant peasants, and convicts from urban New York, and characterizes practically every Northern state through a description of the soldiers she contributes to the Union Army. These digressions into the past life of typical Andersonville prisoners, into a world that, alas, will never be the same, gives the novel a third-dimension, a breadth which cannot be attained from the mere textbook in American history.

Closely related to this sociological concern is Kantor's comment about nineteenth-century religion in America. If I read him correctly, he is telling us that the American church had no vital message for the nation during the greatest of its crises, and could offer her no leadership. To be sure, religion is a part of the consciousness of many of the prisoners. However, it is not thoroughgoing; it is pragmatic, fundamentalistic, and ineffective. It helps the prisoners retain their sanity, reconciles them to death for the sake of future reward, and is used as the ostensible purpose of "prayer meet-

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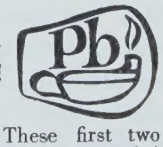

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Book Review — Continued

ings," meetings organized to conceal the deliberations of those prisoners who plan the defeat of Willie Collin's Raiders. There are other evidences of Kantor's judgment. The Catholic priest is so busy performing the last rites for the dying that he has no time to minister to the living. The Bible-quoting Presbyterian minister comes to look on — from a distance. He is a speculative theologian upon whom the realities of Andersonville and the war are quite lost. Lucy, Ira Claffey's daughter, had learned her Catechism well in her youth, but is quite overwhelmed by the successive catastrophes which befall her and finds charity and righteousness "lame swords" for the battle of life.

Once again, Kantor senses with other twentieth-century authors the truth that one's domestic relationships provide the clue to one's total integration with all of life. He senses, too, that the most forceful way to demonstrate the fact that war is demoralizing and disruptive of all normal relationships and moral patterns is to observe the sexual deviations among the civilian population and the military alike. There is an excess of this material, but his intent is unmistakable and his achievement undeniable.

The most important of the contemporary traditions which have controlled Kantor's handling of his narrative, however, is that attitude or bent of mind which has been given the term Existentialism. Although he makes no attempt to define the term philosophically, as an artist he suggests concretely several facets of this creed. To begin with, the threat of the futility of life is present as a subtle toxin throughout the work. Significantly enough, there is no suggestion of ideals, of those moral crusades which supposedly inspired the Civil War. Ira Claffey, who lost three sons in the war and has witnessed the growing insanity of his wife, grasps for meaning and hope, looking for that "something so dim that it must be holy." But in his bitterest moments he is compelled to say: "They died for — They died — That's it. The Alpha and the Omega. They died." There are other episodes to add to the atmosphere of despair and futility. There is, for example, the wearying succession of almost-successful escapes, and the cruelly false rumors of exchange. And the killing of Nathan Dreyfuss, the noblest and most sensitive prisoner of them all, by an irresponsible adolescent, is the cruelist stroke of irony in the entire novel.

Again, in true existentialist fashion, each prisoner is compelled to come to terms with his situation and to carve out a kind of universe for himself. He has nothing but a piece of tarpaulin and some bits of wood to protect him from the cold of the winter and the heat of the summer. His survival depends on how successful a trader he is. We watch him with pity as he participates in the commerce of the vast market place of Andersonville, where nothing is assessed at its true value. We see him barter for and with a belt buckle, a punctured tin cup, a button, a picture frame, a shoe string — in the hope that one or another of these items will eventually get him an extra bit of food. He must maintain a keen eye for the stronger and more ruthless who barter with different currency: a broken jaw for a piece of rope, a lethal blow in the abdomen for a shoe, a life for a comb. Such is the everyday life of the metropolis of Andersonville. And if he possesses sufficient stamina to withstand these physical hardships, he is as apt as not to become a victim of despair, of his loss of the will to live.

But no one contemplates suicide, and Kantor does salvage some fragments from the ruins of the debacle of Andersonville, which he calls America's worst tragedy. He finds assent in the kinship of humanity, in a few residual vestiges of chivalry. The most striking *example* of this chivalry occurs in the closing chapters of the novel. Overcoming an initial hostility, Ira Claff consents to lend his tools to Co Tebbs, a splenetic and profane veter of the Confederate Army who has l his leg in the War, so that Naz Strick an escaped Yankee prisoner whom C al has spared out of a vague sense decency, can make Coral an artific leg. Here is charity which defies l and military conscience. Here is plantation owner, a symbol of the pa performing in one act a service for Yankee and a Southerner. Someh the legend of chivalry is restored this act of benevolence. Other no of affirmation are present as the pr cipals face the prospect of rebuildi the country from the ruins. There w always be, we are reminded, the si ing of the birds, the productive ear the plants bearing seed after their ki the mystery of life. There will alw be the power of love, and the fer womb. And despite years of error hind and years of error ahead, l says Kantor, will somehow go on, wh each individual gropes to find his d tiny and to create his universe meaning.

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Our several quarrels with Kantor ould not bar from us the wisdom to e distilled from the adundance of ving drama he exhibits to our imagi- ation. It is disturbing, for example, contemplate the crime of Anderson- lle as an inescapable fact of our story; it serves as a sobering reminder at except for God's preserving grace, e line separating the civilized in man om the beast in him is thin indeed. oreover, as we reflect upon the sappointing callousness among us ward the "race question," we are re- inded that the Civil War settled the uestion only formally and not in fact. ne more impression is inescapable. 'e revel quite shamelessly in the com- rts and conveniences of civilized life — sanitation, pure water, adequate nutrition, medicine, air conditioning. But these take on new value as one emerges from his reading of *Andersonville.* These are, to be sure, achievements that comport well with the dignity of man, but they have not been nor are universally shared. They are gifts, not deserved mercies.

Kantor's contribution to the literary repertoire of the Civil War, of the war which Benét calls "The pastoral rebellion of the earth / Against machines, against the Age of Steam," is impressive and solid. The sheer historian is left panting as Kantor imaginatively imparts life and breath to any merely scientific report of the darkest page in our history.

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

tters concerning Henry Zylstra —

. . . I am very sorry indeed to arn of Dr. Zylstra's death. I had ad with appreciation some of his ntributions to the *Journal* and I ew of the valuable work he did as translator from Dutch into English. 'e can ill afford to lose men of his liber. —F. F. BRUCE

heffield, England

* * *

. . . The death of Dr. Zylstra is a ow, not alone to Calvin, but to the hole evangelical enterprise in our day, d one which only the special provi- nce of God can and will turn to ain. After the loss of Dr. De Boer, alvin has been hard hit.

—CARL F. H. HENRY

'ashington, D. C.

* * *

. . . Sunday evening, Dr. and Mrs. ylstra visited at the home of Profes- or Grosheide and the Berkouwers ere there also. After they left, Dr. nd Mrs. Zylstra walked to the bus- alte to take the bus back to Amstel- een. As they were waiting, Dr. Zyl- ra said suddenly, "There's something ot right," and fell into his wife's arms nd then to the street. He passed way within a moment or two. . . . here was no other warning.

Dr. Zylstra tried to conserve himself ere, though naturally he had to walk quite a lot and also had many and perhaps too exciting experiences. But he was really happy and I heard his laughter often. . . .

There is no more to say. I feel as though I am closing a book with this letter. Indeed, the pages were all turned already and now the cover must flip shut. It was a majestic and God-glorifying book; we shall not read its like soon again. The conclusion came much too quickly, but the Author meant it so and there is no rebellion possible tonight or ever.

—EUGENE RUBINGH

Amsterdam

* * *

. . . We were all . . . deeply shocked by Dr. Zylstra's . . . untimely death. . . . He looked forward to his stay here with great eagerness and enthusiasm. He had a broader purpose than merely lecturing on American and English literature. He was immensely interested in the theological and ecclesiastical climate, and thoroughly enjoyed knowing it first hand. . . . His analysis and critique was probably still tentative in his own mind, but how incisive and ripe it already was! What a great asset he could have been in promoting the relations and understanding between these two lands if only he would have been given time to wield his able pen. . . .

With his excellent knowledge of the language he immediately plunged into Dutch living. He subscribed to the *Gereformeerde Weekblad*, the *Centraal Weekblad*, and the Reformed newspaper, *Trouw*, besides receiving other publications. He read them all avidly, always analyzing, comparing, reconstructing.

He never missed any functions, official or informal, connected with the Free University, because they gave opportunity to make new acquaintances, to question and discuss the many things both old and new that he was observing. . . .

Here as there, Dr. Zylstra was always willing to lend his services and capabilities. He spoke in October for the foreign student group of the Free University. Two weeks before his death he conducted a Sunday afternoon church service for the English-speaking people in the vicinity. . . . He was also busy writing an article in Dutch for the magazine, *De Gids*. . . . He also completed a translation of a Dutch book about Peter Stuyvesant.

He . . . had no equal among the professors . . . here in his knowledge of English literature. The students at-

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tended his lectures faithfully and that is . . . exceptional . . . for the average Dutch student.

—DOUGLAS VANDER WALL

Amsterdam

* * *

. . . Especially is this untimely death of Dr. Zylstra a great loss to Mrs. Zylstra and the children. But not alone to them. For Calvin College, too, it is very definitely a great loss. Dr. Zylstra was one of the most brilliant scholars which Calvin College could count among its professors. And we his friends all lose a great deal in Dr. Zylstra. He was a very lovable person, a fine Christian, and a man of an open and honest character, even though sometimes he appeared somewhat quiet and absorbed in his own thinking. In the very depths of his being he felt himself closely bound to his friends. He was a man of great integrity, on whom one could depend. And we noticed here in The Netherlands that he was a man who lived very close to his Lord. —JAN WATERINK

SIRS:

May I make a brief comment on the informative article by Dr. G. Stob on "The Labor Problem" in the November issue?

It is heartwarming to see that so many people take interest in the subject, and so many opinions are voiced on its many facets. However, it seems that among all the opinions to be read we hear too few basic facts. Upon reading some of the statements quoted by Dr. Stob, an analysis of the statement should show a certain factual basis for it. This should always be the case, even in our abstract thinking: any abstraction *must* be based upon facts and reality, otherwise it becomes nonsense.

Now I am quite sure that the writers on the labor problem wish and intend to base their expressions on facts. But at the same time we should make allowance for the complications that arise in the minds of those who are coming to us from various parts of Europe. Anyone of us who has spent some time in Europe returns impressed with the difference in history, in philosophy, in expression, and in life. For instance: the French people desire to have several political parties in their government, (for that matter in the country of the Netherlands, with ten million inhabitants, there were before the war fifty-three political parties!) whereas in the United States we believe that the two-party system is best. In the same vein we observe that determination of wages and working conditions in Europe is dealt with in a certain (often theoretical) way, and, again, in America we deal with these problems in a different way: we are rather pragmatic about it, and repudiate much of the economic theory.

To the outside world the American way of handling labor problems is something unique; among those who think it incomprehensible are even some of us Americans ourselves. And if there are *citizens* who do not understand these matters, should we hold our friends, the *immigrants*, responsible for things we have no knowledge of ourselves?

Judging from the general interest, it seems that the problem is recognized as one of predominant importance, to which we ought to address ourselves in full discussion. However, I think that Dr. Stob is correct in inferring that at present there is no proper discussion of the problem possible, because the general basis for a discussion is lacking. Then, in fairness to immigrants as well as citizens, wouldn't it be advisable that some expository remarks are made on the history and legal position of the labor movement in the United States, and if possible a short view of European thinking, so that we may define basic issues, and have a common ground for discussion?

Undoubtedly Eastern and Western "hemispherians" alike will follow your efforts with interest.

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